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Allegiances

DarkClan

Leader:
Wildstar- orange tabby tom with wildly green eyes

Deputy:
Leafpelt- young, dark tabby tom with amber eyes

Medicine Cat:
Flowerpelt- golden furred she cat

Warriors:
Smallstone- small stony gray tom with torn ears *Apprentice- Nightpaw*

Sandflurry- sandy colored she cat with dark amber eyes *Apprentice- Birchpaw*

Speckleleaf- pretty, speckled tabby she cat with golden eyes *Apprentice- Dawnpaw*

Ravenwing- dark gray black tom with amber eyes and white ear tips

Feathersong- white she cat with gray patches

Reedfoot- light brown tom with dark green eyes

Briarfang- tortoiseshell tom with blue eyes

Apprentices:
Nightpaw- black she cat with yellow eyes

Dawnpaw- tortoiseshell and white she cat with blue eyes

Birchpaw- dark ginger she cat with unusual birch colored eyes

Queens:

Barrenrock- pale ginger cat with green eyes (Kits: Softkit, Blackkit, Whitekit, Orangekit)

Petaltail- light gray cat with blue eyes (Kits: Rustkit, Rosekit)

Elders:
Whitefang- white tom with silver eyes

Flintheart- dark gray tom with white chest and paws

LightClan

Leader:
Swallowstar- small, light brown tabby she cat

Deputy:
Bumbletail- ginger tom with black stripes on his tail

Warriors:
Forestfoot- massive dark tabby with amber eyes

FlameClan

Leader:
Redstar- massive dark ginger tom with bright yellow eyes

Deputy:
Cinderclaw- gray tom

WaterClan

Leader:
Volestar- small brown she cat

Deputy:
Sunleap- golden tom

Cats Outside Clans

Holly- a very young, fluffy silver and white she cat with blue eyes, a runaway kittypet

Mikey- a small, white tom with tan tail and two different color eyes

(one blue one gold) a kittypet

Fang- dark gray tom with big paws and long claws, a rouge

One-Eye- brown tom with one amber eye

Prologue

The moon shone brightly over the forest. A small tabby leaped up onto a low branch of a tree, which overlooked a river. Another tabby, but much bigger, appeared out of the bushes. His amber eyes glowed in the darkness.

"Forestfoot," the smaller tabby spoke. "What are you doing out here?"

The bigger tabby snorted. "I should ask the same of you, Swallowstar."

Swallowstar squinted in the dark. "Might I ask what you are doing late at night?"

"I am hunting for a late night snack," Forestfoot replied. "What are *you* doing late at night in a tree?"

Swallowstar leaped down and stood face to face with the larger tabby. "I'm getting away from the camp to *think*."

Forestfoot didn't look convinced. "To *think*? About what?"

"The Clan. The way we are all suffering this leaf-fall. We all have had fewer warriors in our Clans than ever before."

"Has StarClan spoken?" Forestfoot asked, looking up at the starry night sky.

Swallowstar shook her head. "No. They haven't."

Forestfoot looked at her, a weird glint in his eye. "Well then, that'll have to change."

Swallowstar stared at him confused. "What? What do you mean?"

Forestfoot leaped at his leader, claws unsheathed, and pinned her to the ground. His long claws dug into Swallowstar's skin, making it

bleed. "I'll just have to kill you seven times, then I'll go after that precious deputy of yours and kill him too. I'll tell the rest of the Clan how you two were killed in a fight with rogues and I was the only one that survived; how you said with your dying breath that *I* would take over as leader."

Swallowstar threw the bigger cat off of her with her hind legs and scrambled to her paws. "I will *not* let that happen, Forestfoot." She leaped at him and landed on his back, scratching and clawing as he tried to shake her off.

Forestfoot finally shook her off and she fell, but quickly got up. "You're pretty tough for a small cat," Forestfoot grunted. "But not for long."

Swallowstar stood her ground as the tabby lunged at her, but she sidestepped and let Forestfoot fall down. She put her paw on top of him before he could get up. "You are no warrior of LightClan," she said. "By the power of StarClan, I exile you. You are no longer welcome in this territory."

She lifted her paw off of his back and Forestfoot stood up to face her. "Don't think you've won, Swallowstar. I'll be back to finish you off." He then turned and vanished into the forest.

Chapter 1

The den was filled with the smell of milk. A young black kit could just make out the shapes of giant cats. "What should we name them?" one of them asked.

An older, but soothing, voice replied, "Name them whatever you feel suits them."

The kit looked up to see two more cats, slightly smaller than the others, staring at her and her siblings excitedly. The dark black one said, "How about this one be Blackkit?" She gestured with her paw to a very fluffy black kit with green eyes.

"That's a wonderful name, Nightpaw," the soothing voice spoke again. "Blackkit."

A multicolored cat with blue eyes gestured to another kit, who was flame colored. "That one should be Orangekit, because he's orange. And the black one with white paws should be Whitekit."

The soothing voice spoke again. "Dawnpaw, let's try to not name them all after colors."

The dark black cat spoke, this time, rubbing her rough paw pads over the young black kit's fur. "This one should be Softkit, because she has soft fur."

Softkit purred. She had a name. Softkit swiveled her head to look at where the soothing voice was coming from. It belonged to a pale ginger cat with green eyes, just like all four of the kits had. She must be their mother. *Her* mother.

Dawnpaw and Nightpaw both dipped their heads and said goodbye, then bounded out of the den, leaving the kits with their mother and another queen.

"Never let apprentices name kits," the other queen sighed.

Softkit's mother snorted. "And why not, Petaltail?"

Petaltail sighed again. "My littermate was named by an apprentice. They named him Dirtkit."

Softkit's mother snorted again, but this time it was in amusement. "I will tell Wildstar that we have decided their names: Blackkit, Orangekit, Whitekit and Softkit."

Softkit nuzzled close to her mother, breathing in the milk scent and taking in her warmth. She wanted nothing more than to be close to her mother and siblings.

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Softkit watched from just outside the nursery as Dawnpaw and Nightpaw played with a moss ball in the clearing. It was the first time Softkit and her siblings got a view of the DarkClan camp. It was surrounded by a huge bramble and thorn wall with dens inside of it, and there was a huge tree stump in the center, where Wildstar would make his announcements and hold Clan meetings. Underneath the stump was a huge burrow, where Wildstar would sleep and spend a lot of his eating and sleeping time. And there were two tunnels which Softkit did not know where they led, but she hoped to find out what was beyond them.

Nightpaw snagged the moss ball on her claw, but it was tangled and stuck. She tried shaking it off, but it wouldn't come loose.

"What are you waiting for? Toss it already!" Dawnpaw whined.

"It's stuck!" Nightpaw kept trying to pull it off, but nothing worked.

Softkit ran over. "Let me help!" she squeaked. She started untangling it with her claw strand by strand until it came off.

"Thanks!" Nightpaw said and rolled it towards Dawnpaw.

Blackkit bounded over to Softkit, her siblings and Birchpaw at her heels. "Birchpaw offered to show us around the camp!" she squealed.

"More like *begged me* to show you," Birchpaw muttered.

Softkit beamed. "Really?!"

Whitekit bounced up and down eagerly, his white paws scrabbling at the earth. "Yes yes yes!"

Birchpaw started leading the way and explaining, starting with the nursery. "As you already know, this is the nursery, where the kits are cared for until they are ready to become apprentices."

"When can *we* become apprentices?" Orangekit interrupted.

"When you're six moons old," Birchpaw replied.

"How old are we now?" Whitekit asked.

Birchpaw snorted. "Relax. You're almost a moon old. You still have a long time." She continued showing the kits around the camp.

"This next den is the apprentices' den, where me, Nightpaw and Dawnpaw sleep. The apprentices are trained to either be warriors or medicine cats. They have mentors who teach them the ways of the Clan and then, once Wildstar and the mentors feel that we are ready, they give an assessment and we graduate to full fledged warriors, or medicine cats. The only downside: we have to care for the elders. Change their bedding, get rid of their ticks..."

"Ew!" Blackkit squeaked, disgusted. "Do *we* have to do that?!"

"All apprentices have to," Birchpaw said. "It's part of being a warrior." She started off towards the large tunnel of brambles at the front of the camp. "This is the entrance. It's just a bramble tunnel, but what lies beyond it is *really* cool! It's the rest of the DarkClan territory, and other territories too."

Whitekit bounced up and down eagerly. "Can *we* explore out there?"

Birchpaw shook her head. "Not until you're apprentices. For now, the elders can tell you stories about it." She continued showing them the camp. "This is the warriors' den. It's where the warriors sleep. The warriors are the ones who do the main jobs like hunting

and fighting. The deputy sleeps in there too. He's got one of the toughest jobs. He has to carry out double the amount of duties. Hunting, fighting, patrols one after the other, organizing patrols, leader duties."

"Wow!" Blackkit exclaimed. "That's a lot!"

Birchpaw nodded. "That's why the leader must choose the best cats to become deputy. Then, once the leader dies or retires, the deputy takes over and must appoint a new second-in-command. After the leader loses all nine lives-"

"Nine lives?" Orangekit wondered. "What do you mean?"

"StarClan always appoints the new leader with nine lives. It's quite mysterious if you ask me." Birchpaw started walking again towards a new den. "This is the elders' den. When a cat becomes too old or weak to continue their warrior duties, they retire and move to the elders' den. They normally get to live the rest of their lives in peace and tell stories to the apprentices. The elders and kits must always be fed before warriors and apprentices, which brings us to the fresh-kill pile."

Birchpaw padded to a small pile of fresh-kill next to the tree stump. "There's nothing much to show here, but this is the fresh-kill pile. Warriors and apprentices often go on hunting patrols to bring back food for the Clan. They normally dump it all here."

"What'cha doin', Birchpaw?" said a golden furred she cat.

Birchpaw perked her ears up. "I'm just showing Barrenrock's kits around the camp."

Softkit looked up at the apprentice. "Who is that?" she asked.

"That's Flowerpelt," Birchpaw replied. "She's our Clan medicine cat. She heals the sick or injured and interprets signs from StarClan."

Flowerpelt's tail stuck straight up. "I could give you a tour of the medicine den if you'd like?"

Whitekit's head nodded vigorously. "Oh yes!"

The medicine cat led them towards the back of the camp, where the small, fern tunnel lied. The kits and apprentice followed Flowerpelt through it to a small cave. There was a hole in the ceiling, allowing sunlight in. Many nests laid around, including the medicine cat's nest of moss and one for the next medicine cat apprentice. A big nook in the cave wall was storage for herbs and remedies. Orangekit stared in awe.

"This is the medicine den," Flowerpelt explained. "All of the sick or injured cats of the Clan can come here to be cared for. I have my stock of herbs over there." She flicked her tail towards the nook.

"Sounds boring," Blackkit said. "*I* plan on becoming a warrior."

"You can't just *plan on becoming a warrior*," Whitekit said. "You have to *earn* your title; and to earn your title, you have to prove yourself worthy by defending what is right, helping the Clan in as many ways as possible, obeying the will of StarClan and our leader, and fighting alongside your Clanmates."

Flowerpelt beamed. "That's very good of you, Whitekit. Indeed. Those qualities help make a good warrior."

"*I* want to be a medicine cat," Orangekit said. "I feel like this was meant for me."

Flowerpelt beamed even more. "Then I will be happy to have you as my apprentice. I will speak with Wildstar and see what he can do."

Blackkit snorted. "Do you do anything else besides sniff leaves?"

"Of course! She interprets signs from StarClan! She actually gets to *see* our ancestors and speak with them!" Softkit piped. "That must be cool; but I think I'd prefer training as a warrior."

Flowerpelt leaned in to the four kits and said with a strange glint in her eyes, "You kits can do anything you put your minds to. Absolutely *anything*."

Chapter 2

Softkit nestled next to her mother and siblings. The sun was starting to set and the kits were all tired out. Flowerpelt's words rung in the young kit's ears. Could she really do *anything*?

Blackkit pawed at her mother's belly, kneading the warm milk out. "I can't wait to be a warrior!" she squealed.

Barrenrock sighed. "You'll be one in time. All of you will."

"Actually," Orangekit said. "I want to be a medicine cat."

Whitekit cuffed his brother over the ear. "Who wants to spend their time stuck in that stuffy cave with sick cats and chewing mush? Warriors get to go out and be free and fight. When *I'm* a warrior, I'll make sure no cat will even go *near* our territory!"

"Medicine cats get to fight and explore too," Orangekit mewed. "And being a medicine cat is one of the most important jobs in the Clan. We help our Clanmates and speak with StarClan."

Barrenrock mewed in amusement, "You kits can be whatever you want."

Softkit stood up and puffed out her chest. *I'm going to be a warrior,* she thought.

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Softkit opened her eyes. The nest was dark. She could see the rising and falling of her siblings' flanks as they slept. But something wasn't right. Something was going on outside the nursery.

Softkit cautiously stood up, careful not to wake her mother or littermates, and crept her way out of the den. It was a good thing that she was entirely black so she could blend in with the night. She could see Flowerpelt and Wildstar heading towards the stump.

"So how are the other Clans managing?" Wildstar asked.

Flowerpelt looked worried and just replied, "I'll tell you in a minute."

The two cats went inside the leader's den, and Softkit crept forward, angling her right ear towards the den to eavesdrop. She pressed herself against the tree stump, careful not be noticed.

"Wildstar, the other Clans are managing fairly well. I have heard news that Swallowstar has exiled Forestfoot." Flowerpelt's voice wavered as she spoke.

"Exiled?!" Wildstar sounded surprised. "What for?"

"He apparently attacked his own leader and threatened to take over LightClan," Softkit heard Flowerpelt mew. "He's now roaming the territories as a rogue."

"I will alert our warriors to keep an eye out for him," Wildstar's grumbly meow said.

"But there's more." Flowerpelt took a deep breath before continuing. "I have received a prophecy from StarClan. In fact, *every* medicine cat has received the same one."

"I thought the medicine cats were not allowed to talk about their dreams," Wildstar questioned.

"We all walked in the dream together," Flowerpelt said. "*There will be one out of four, who will return to live twice,*" she recited.

Softkit's green eyes widened. A prophecy! StarClan had sent a prophecy! But what did it mean?

Wildstar sounded confused. "What does it mean?"

"I don't know. We're all stumped." The medicine cat paused before asking, "Does it mean anything to you? Does it sound familiar?"

"*There will be one out of four.* One out of four cats maybe? *Return to live twice.* Reincarnation?" Wildstar said.

"Possibly. I'm not sure of Anything yet."

There was a long pause before Wildstar said, "We'll talk about it in the morning."

The two cats started to stir and Softkit bounded back towards the nursery before anyone would notice she was there.

Chapter 3

Softkit prodded the moss ball.

"Come on! Will you toss it already?!" Blackkit complained.

Softkit couldn't get Flowerpelt's words out of her head. *There will be one out of four, who will return to live twice.* What did it mean?

"Hey furball! Toss the stupid ball already!" Orangekit kneaded his paws into the ground.

Softkit shook her head and whacked the moss ball with her paw. It soared through the air and over the bramble barrier.

Whitekit groaned. "Great. Nice going, Softkit."

"Sorry!" Softkit apologized. "I'll get it!"

Before anyone could object, Softkit bounded towards the camp entrance. She made her way through the tunnel and out into the forest. She had to stop and stare. The trees loomed over her. It was her first time outside the camp.

"Wait a second!" Blackkit followed her outside. "We're not supposed to leave the camp by ourselves!"

"I'm only going to get the moss ball," Softkit said. "It's no big deal."

"You mousebrain," Blackkit cuffed her littermate around the ear. "Be quick about it."

Softkit padded around to the side of the bramble wall where the ball had flown over. It didn't take long to find it. She snagged it on her claw and called, "Found it!"

"What are you two kits doing out here?" a stern voice said.

The kits froze as brown fur appeared in their wake.

"L-Leafpelt?" Blackkit managed to mew.

Leafpelt's amber gaze bore into the sisters. "You realize that kits are not allowed off the Clan camp grounds, right?"

Blackkit bowed her head in submission, but Softkit just puffed out her chest. "We know. We were just playing when our ball went over the wall. We just came to retrieve it. That's all."

The deputy flicked his tail. "I won't report this to Wildstar or your parents, but next time I will if this happens again. Now head back to camp at once."

The kits made their way back through the tunnel, where the others were waiting for them.

"What took you so long?!" Orangekit huffed, but he immediately backed off when he saw the young tabby deputy standing before them. "Oh. Hello, Leafpelt."

"You kits should be more careful. Don't let me catch you outside again. Understand?"

They all dipped their heads in response before he padded off to the warriors' den.

"What's got *his* tail in a knot?" Blackkit said. "I've never seen him like this."

"Maybe something happened?" Whitekit chimed in.

Softkit looked at her paws, remembering the scene she had witnessed last night. Flowerpelt had told Wildstar about a prophecy. Did Wildstar tell Leafpelt about it? Was that the reason why he seemed a little colder than usual?

"Hey! Softkit! Anyone home?!" Whitekit waved a paw in her face. "What are you, daydreaming?"

Softkit hadn't realized how lost in thought she was. "Oh. Sorry."

"Can we go back to playing now?"

"Yeah." Softkit shook her head to clear and kicked the moss ball, but the prophecy kept tugging at her deep down. What did it all mean?

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"Leafpelt, Briarfang, Smallstone, and Nightpaw will take this Sunhigh's patrol. Ravenwing, Feathersong, Speckleleaf, and Dawnpaw..."

Wildstar was assigning the patrols as the kits and apprentices were eating their fresh-kill.

"Aw! Why do *I* have to go on the patrol now?! I don't want to go! This is all just a load of dung!" Nightpaw complained.

"There's no way Smallstone's letting you out of this," Dawnpaw teased. "I would listen to your mentor if I were you and just get it out of the way."

Nightpaw heaved herself up with a puff and trotted off to go meet with the rest of the patrol.

"I'm assuming she's not coming back to finish this," Birchpaw said as she snagged her claw on Nightpaw's leftover meal and started eating it.

"No wonder you're a 'big queen'," Dawnpaw mumbled.

Birchpaw narrowed her eyes at her fellow apprentice and snarled. "*What* did you say?"

"N-nothing!"

Softkit watched longingly as the patrol disappeared through the tunnel. How she wanted so badly to see the forest again.

"Hey Softkit. What's the matter?" Blackkit nudged her sister.

Softkit looked at her, a weird glint in her eye. "Feel like venturing out into the forest again? Leafpelt's not here to scold us."

"*What*?! Are you crazy?! No! You're even more mouse-brained than I

thought! Do you want to get in trouble again?!"

"Aw come on! I can't stay in this camp for one more moment! I need adventure!"

Blackkit just stared at her before muttering, "You're insane."

Softkit started towards the tunnel. "Watch me!"

"You can't be serious Softkit!" Blackkit followed after her littermate.

A sound that seemed to resemble a cackle escapes from Softkit's mouth as she pushed her through the tunnel and into the forest. The sensation and concept of *danger* and *adventure* excited her. The forest! What a great place to explore! The camp was so boring and void of fun.

"See Blackkit?! It's not so bad!" Softkit turned to the tunnel, expecting her sister to be there, but she wasn't. Blackkit had not made her way through. Perhaps she was too scared.

"Fine. Be a scaredy-cat," Softkit snorted as she bounded away. The wind ruffled her fur. Faster. Faster she ran. It felt so good to be free! Leaves crunched under her paws as she increased her speed. Trees flew past her vision in a blur of brown and green. Sunlight struggled to male its way through the branches in leaves, casting speckles of light on her pelt. Softkit had never run this fast or this much before, so after only a few moments, her limbs became tired and she had to stop, panting.

A mouse sat by a tree trunk nearby, nibbling on an acorn. Softkit crouches down, in an attempt to prepare herself to pounce. How cool would that be if she caught her first kill?! She would brag about it endlessly to her littermates! Her muscles tensed as she readied herself, but a soft meow cut through the silence and the mouse scurried away. Softkit pounced anyway, hoping to possibly catch it, but she landed on the ground, no mouse in her grasp.

"Who did that?!" Softkit shrieked, standing up straight and looking around. "Blackkit?! Is that you?! You made me miss my first kill! No fair!"

Softkit looked around, but Blackkit was nowhere to be seen. "Blackkit? Are you there? This isn't funny!"

A rustle sounded behind her, so she whipped around and noticed a flash of silver and white dash behind the bushes. "Hey!" she cried. "Where are you? Show yourself!"

And then the cat revealed them-self. A very young, very fluffy silver and white she-cat. She couldn't have been more than a few moons older than Softkit. "You're very fast," she mewed. "I saw you running before."

"Who are you? And thanks a lot for making me miss my first kill!" Softkit began to worry. *I should never have left camp! Now I'm really going to be in big trouble, unless this cat kills me first!*

The she-cat swished her fluffy tail. "You wouldn't have caught it anyways. Your posture was terrible."

Softkit started to grow irritated. "You're just a kit, aren't you? How would *you* know what the right way to pounce is?"

"*You're* just a kit, too," she chided. "And I've been practicing how to hunt. Watching those Clan cats hunt during the day taught me a few things."

The strange cat referred to Softkit's clan mates as if she was not actually part of a Clan herself. As Softkit peered closer, she could see a lick of red poking out from the fur around the cat's neck. It was a collar. She was a kittypet. Softkit had heard stories about kittypets. They were cats who were cared for by Twolegs.

"You're a kittypet?!" Softkit cried. "I hate kittypets! You're just a Twoleg toy! *And* you made me lose my mouse!" Recklessly, Softkit readied herself to fight.

The kittypet noticed that Softkit's stance had changed. "Are you going to fight me?" She snorted and crouched into a pouncing position. "Fine then. Bring it on, *kit."*